

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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EB-07 FPC-01 H-01 INR-05 INT-05 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05

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FM AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2281

INFO AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY MANAMA

AMEMBASSY MUSCAT

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KUWAIT ALSO PASS DOHA

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PGOV, TC

SUBJ: SHAIKH ZAYID OPENS UAE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

1. ON THE EVE OF THE THIRD ANNIVERSARY OF THE UAE, SHAIKH ZAYID ACCOMPANIED BY THE SIX OTHER EMIRATE RULERS OPENED THE NEW SESSION OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY ON NOVEMBER 20. (THIS IS THE UAE'S 40-MAN FEDERAL COUNCIL WITH WEIGHTED REPRESENTATION FROM EACH OF THE SHAIKH-DOMS, THE REPRESENTATIVES THEMSELVES BEING APPOINTED BY THE RULERS.) NO STARTLIN ANNOUNCEMENTS CAME FORTH ALTHOUGH IN A SURPRISE MOVE, ZAYID INVITED VISITING PRIME MINISTER HIJAZI OF EGYPT TO ADDRESS THE CONSULTATIVE COUNCIL AND COUNCIL OF MINISTERS.

2. ZAYID HIMSELF DID NOT GIVE HIS ADDRESS, BUT HAD THE MINISTER OF LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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FINANCE AND INDUSTRY READ HIS PREPARED SPEECH. IN FOREIGN AFFAIRS,

ZAYID EMPHASIZED UAE'S COMMITMENT TO THE PLO AS SOLE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE PALESTINIANS. OCTOBER WAS WAS LANDMARK FOR ARABS AND UAE WOULD CONTINUE ITS SUPPORT FOR ALL ARAB COUNTRIES IN THEIR STRUGGLE AGAINST ISRAEL. PEACE WOULD ONLY COME WHEN ISRAEL AGREED TO WITHDRAW FROM ALL OCCUPIED TERRITORIES AND TO RESTORE TO PALESTINIANS THEIR RIGHTS. ZAYID STATED HE WAS PROUD OF THE BORDER AGREEMENT WITH SAUDI ARABIA WHICH, HE SAID, OPENED NEW ERA IN UAE-SAUDI RELATIONS.

3. REGARDING OIL PRICES, SHAIKH ZAYID SAID THAT PROBLEMS OF INFLATION, DEVALUATION OF CURRENCIES AND MONETARY DISLOCATION STARTED LONG BEFORE RISE IN PRICE OF OIL, ADDING THAT PRICE OF OIL CANNOT BE DISCUSSED APART FROM PRICE OF INDUSTRIAL PRODUCTS AND FOODSTUFFS. HE CALLED FOR INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE, UNDER UN AUSPICES

, TO DISCUSS ALL THESE PROBLEMS, INCLUDING PROBLEMS OF UNDERDEVELOPED COUNTRIES WHICH CANNOT BE IGNORED. HE ADDED THAT UAE'S OIL POLICY IS ONE THAT IS CONFORMITY WITH THAT OF OTHER ARAB COUNTRIES AND OPEC. ZAYID SAID THAT 15 PERCENT OF UAE'S INCOME HAS GONE TO UNDERDEVELOPED COUNTRIES.

4. ON INTERNAL DEVELOPMENT, SHAIKH ZAYID OUTLINED PROGRAM FOR NEXT FEW YEARS. SOME OF MAIN ELEMENTS WERE: UNIFICATION OF THE TELEPHONE AND CABLE SERVICES IN THE FEDERATION BY ACQUIRING 60 PERCENT OF THE SHARES OF THE VARIOUS COMPANIES NOW OPERATING IN THE UAE; CONSTRUCTION OF SINGLE POWER GRID SYSTEM FOR THE COUNTRY; REMOVAL OF ALL TAXES ON ESSENTIAL FOOD IMPORTS TO RELIEVE BURDEN ON LOCAL CONSUMERS; COMPLETION OF PERMANENT UAE CONSTITUTION BY DECEMBER OF 1976. ZAYID STRESSED NEED FOR HEAVY INVESTMENT IN WATER, POWER, AND HOUSING PROJECTS THROUGHOUT UAE. BEYOND THESE MAJOR INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS, ZAYID SAID EDUCATION, HEALTH AND INFORMATION WOULD BE MAJOR ITEMS FOR THE ASSEMBLY TO CONSIDER.

5. PRIME MINISTER HIJAZI'S ADDRESS TO ASSEMBLY WAS BRIEF AND PRO FORMA. HE THANKED ZAYID FOR HIS SUPPORT DURING LAST OCTOBER WAR IN FORM OF CUTTING OFF OIL TO THOSE COUNTRIES THAT SUPPORTED ISRAEL. ARABS WERE STRONGER NOW THAN EVER AND MORE UNITED IN THEIR CAUSE. HIJAZI MENTIONED EGYPT'S NEW ECONOMIC PLAN WHICH WOULD SERVE BOTH THE INTEREST OF HIS COUNTRY AND OTHER ARAB COUNTRIES.

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6. COMMENT: TO DEMONSTRATE IT IS MOVING WITH THE TIMES SHAIKH ZAYID FEELS UAE MUST HAVE ITS NATIONAL ASSEMBLY. RULERS ARE CONTENT, HOWEVER, VG MAKE ONLY MEREST PRETENSE THAT ASSEMBLY HAS ANY ROLE TO PLAY IN GRAPPLING WITH UAE'S BURGEONING DEVELOPMENTAL PROBLEMS. WE ARE TOLD BILLS FROM LAST SESSION ARE STILL PILED UP, WITH EVEN STRICTLY RUBBER-STAMP APPROVAL WHICH IS EXPECTED OF ASSEMBLY APPARENTLY POSING HEAVY STRAIN ON ITS LIMITED RESOURCES.
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